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THE RELATION OF THE STATE TO EDUCATION
IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA.

Historians may differ as to whether our American institutions sprang from England or Holland. They may agree to divide the honors and may possibly be willing ultimately to accord to America some originating power of her own. The question of the cause of the divergence in the institutions of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations is an interesting one, and probably no phase of it is more interesting than that which deals with educational systems.

A great factor in the divergence has undoubtedly been the fact that English systems have been built up by the slow accretions of ages, every proposed addition being required to show proof, not only of its inherent usefulness, but also of adaptability to the other parts of the edifice already erected ; while here to a much greater extent the ground has been cleared and we have been able to consult utility in determining our structure. Then again, we have been willing to learn from foreigners. The cosmopolitan character of our population is but an index of a cosmopolitan character in our institutions. Holland, Germany, Scandinavia, as well

as England, have been probed by minds open to receive and adopt any suggestions, and these have been woven often unconsciously into our systems. England, with a more homogeneous population and great belief in her own ability to solve all her own problems without assistance, has made a slower but perhaps more characteristically national growth.

Furthermore, over all *our* development has continually hovered the great democratic idea, directing the way to institutions in which it may find a fitting permanent abode. The people ultimately will secure a system giving equal chances, for the people are supreme. The mother country boasts of her equal and in some cases greater political liberty, but it is useless it seems to me to deny that in essential democracy, a democracy which gives a chance for every talent to be fully developed, she is still behind us, though in the past twenty years she has probably gained on us in the race. She still says of democratic ideas what the student in theology gave as an answer to the question as to the church's doctrine on the subject of good works: "A few of them will do no harm;" while we have embraced these ideas readily and fully and are continually modifying all our institutions, social, political and religious, in their direction.

It is not, however, the purpose of this paper to trace the causes, but some of the facts of divergences in the systems of State education in the two countries, and the subjects of contrast which will be treated of are four.

1. The guarantees which the State receives that its money is properly expended by the schools.
2. The provision which it makes for education from the age of fourteen to the age of nineteen.
3. The enforcement of education on unwilling parents and children.
4. The attitude towards religious and Biblical teaching.

1. The English follow up their appropriation with most detailed care. It is not given into local hands to make what they can of it. The system is popularly called "payment

by results," and this expresses the general idea supposed to govern the method. Every shilling given is supposed to be given for a result already obtained. "Have you taught a boy to read and write and cipher?" the government says to a school. "We will not take your word for it, we will ascertain for ourselves, and if so, we will pay you for it." "Is your school in a fair state of discipline and organization? If our inspection satisfies us on this point we will give you a shilling per child. If it is very good we will give you 1 s. 6 d." "Will your children fairly pass our examination in geography? we will give you a shilling a piece; will they do it very well indeed? we will give you two shillings a piece; will they not pass? we will not give you anything," and so on through the list. The epigram of Robert Lowe is supposed to sum up its merits. "If the system is costly it shall be efficient; if inefficient it shall be cheap."

If inspectors were omniscient and infallible, accurately gauging all the good results a school produces, hampered by no instructions and swayed by no prejudices, there could probably be no better system devised than this. It would secure the very greatest good from every penny appropriated.

About \$7,000,000 are paid out by the general government on the basis of this arrangement in aid of education, and this covers about twenty-seven per cent of the total cost of maintaining the schools.

Any denominational or private school, if it fulfills certain general conditions as to religious instruction, quality of teaching, and charges to parents, can be a recipient of this grant.

With regard to the whole system of inspection and "payment by results," a strong controversy has been, and still is raging in England. For it, it is urged that it is necessary for the government to have assurance that the purposes, for which so much public money is voted, are secured; and

the fact that so many of the schools are in private hands makes this all the more important. It is also said to be a guarantee against the tendency, which seems to be especially strong in English schools, particularly those most closely connected with the universities, to give too much attention to a few bright scholars, at the expense of the duller ones ; for evidently such a course would not satisfy inspectors and win grants. Its friends also claim that it is the cause, to a large extent, of the increase in salaries of teachers, and affords a certain means of informing managers as to the relative value of the different teachers, and thus enables them to graduate salaries in proportion to pedagogic or grant-winning abilities. It is certain that salaries have steadily risen under the operation of the system, that teachers hold a higher place in the estimation of the community, and that the best of them have a very handsome remuneration for their services. There is not the level of uniform compensation for teachers of a certain grade, which prevails in most other countries, but the system often makes it economical to secure and retain good teachers, even at an advance over others who are doing, in an inferior manner, the same work. The average salary of men teachers in the public Elementary Schools in England is about \$600, and of women, \$375, while in Pennsylvania it is about \$325 for men, and \$250 for women, and the expenses of living are grèater.

On the other hand, the "cramming" which the system produces is violently protested against. To meet the demands, real or supposed, of the inspector, education is sacrificed to the process of forcing into the scholars, available and grant compelling knowledge. Facts in geography, for instance, count for more than real brain power in a test by an external examiner. The teacher is hampered in the adoption of methods which seem to him best, by the fear that they will not produce the kind of results which the government inquires for, and the scholars are filled with a

sort of knowledge which disappears as rapidly as it was gained. One hears many complaints that the children who leave school at twelve or fourteen often lose almost all their school acquisitions in a few years. This danger is fully recognized by the department, and inspectors are strongly urged not to lay too much stress on mere knowledge.

Another criticism of the system may be given in the words of R. H. Quick :

“Suppose that on leaving school we wished to forecast a lad's future. What shall we try to find out about him? No doubt we shall ask what he knew ; but this would not be by any means the main thing. His skill would interest us, and so would the state of his health. But what we would ask, first and foremost, is this—Whom does he love? Whom does he admire and imitate? What does he care about? What interests him? It is only when the answers to these questions are satisfactory that we can think hopefully of his future ; and it is only in so far as the school course has tended to make the answers satisfactory that it deserves our approval. Schools such as Pestalozzi designed would have thus deserved our approval ; but we cannot say this of the schools into which the children of the English poor are now driven. In these schools the heart and the affections are not thought of, the powers of neither mind nor body are developed by exercise, and the children do not acquire any interests that will raise or elevate them.”

These questions of the development of high ambitions, of character, of good habits, and of physique cannot be too strongly urged on the attention of elementary schools. Together they are more important than any intellectual attainments. They stand the wear and tear of life better, and do more to assist their possessor to prominence and success. If the system does not allow their encouragement, it is a severe indictment against it. It is undoubtedly true that they do not count for very much in obtaining grants. It is also true that success in them is often very difficult to estimate.

Probably the department is doing all that it can to secure them. A grant for "discipline and organization" of 1s. or 1s. 6d. may be made, and inspectors are instructed that they "will have special regard to the moral training and conduct of the children, to the neatness and order of the school premises and furniture, and to the proper classification of the scholars." They are also to be satisfied "that all reasonable care is taken in the ordinary management of the school, to bring up the children in habits of punctuality, of good manners and language, of cleanliness and neatness, and also to impress on the children the importance of cheerful obedience to duty, of consideration and respect for others, and of honor and truthfulness in word and act."

This is excellent; and if under the system good teachers are allowed to get these results, even if to do it certain studies are neglected, there would be but little left to desire.

These arguments do not seem to have undermined the belief of most Englishmen connected with education that "payment by results" is advantageous, or at least necessary for the present.

They have probably produced serious modifications, which have tended towards the idea that it is the work of inspectors to see that school officers do their duty, rather than test very minutely the advancement of the individual scholar in special subjects. These modifications satisfy many of the objectors; and though the clamor does not lack energy and volume, it is more likely to produce further modification than to cause the abolishment of a system which is unquestionably effective in toning up many schools that would otherwise be bad, and which satisfies the Englishman's idea of fairness, and of the propriety of equivalence for public money expended.

Such is the carefully guarded English system—without loop-hole for waste, and with a continual stimulation to goodness of a certain sort.

In Pennsylvania our State Legislature appropriates \$5,000,000 annually towards the schools, about one-third the total revenue, and nearly as much as the English Government. What security does it have against squandering? None, except what it imposes on the school districts in connection with the money they raise for themselves.

There are general laws governing the sort of schools the State will recognize. The teacher must be examined and certificated by the County Superintendent. The schools must be kept open at least 120 days in the year; every person between the ages of six and twenty-one must have the privilege of attending them; and orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, physiology and hygiene, must be taught by a teacher whom the Superintendent pronounces efficient and the local directors appoint.

All of this has to be certified to by the County Commissioners for each district as a condition of receiving any money from the State. This report being received by the State Superintendent he must pay the money in proportion to the number of *resident taxables* in the district. The State cannot go back of the local returns. There is no question of quality of instruction. "Results" have nothing to do with it. The grant creates comparatively little stimulation. It is largely a device to relieve local taxation. The Constitution directs that at least \$1,000,000 shall be given, and undoubtedly this was originally for the purpose of imposing conditions on backward communities as to quality of teachers, length of school year and subjects to be taught. But the State is rich and the districts are poor, and public opinion demanded an increase of State aid, so the appropriation rose finally to \$5,000,000, with but little change in legislation. Of course the increase gives still greater power to enforce State provisions. No district can well afford to throw away lightly so large an increment of revenue, coming to it as a gift and adding no additional responsibility. But it is

doubtful whether, despite the well-meant efforts of County Superintendent and school officers, sufficient betterment of the schools has resulted from the increase. It was done to relieve local taxation, and it has done this. The other effect, to add to gross revenues and consequent efficiency of the schools, is a matter of doubt, except in a few districts already alert.

The county which fulfills the minimum requirements of the law, keeps its schools open for six months of twenty days each, employs the cheapest talent the County Superintendent will pass, and teaches however lamely the prescribed studies, knows it will receive its share of the funds just as if it paid double salaries, had ten months of school year and made its schools first rate, and hence feels no great pressure to improve.

In the English system a State officer, absolutely independent of the locality, follows up the appropriation and on the basis of his report it is granted. In America, for while the local idea is very strong in Pennsylvania, it may in this respect be taken as a typical State, all is left to the locality. The easily fulfilled general conditions are compatible with very poor schools. County superintendents elected by the directors, and seeking election every three years, are not always very rigid in examining teachers. They cannot be, for the directors fix the salary and these will not draw in all parts the best material, and yet in a sense the law is complied with, and the commissioners elected by the same constituency certify this to the State officer, who has no option but to pay the money.

The English system applied to Pennsylvania would first destroy an immense number of weakly schools, and then it would build up in their places schools of better sort and would work up the tone of unwilling and lethargic communities.

And yet I would not wish its adoption. The strength derived from local independence is a factor we cannot ignore.

The continual burden of working up to the requirements of an external examiner is such a fetter on a good teacher that one would not want it. If our worst schools are worse than the English, I believe our best schools are better, for in many places a teacher is asked for no results except her general tone and impression on the school, and this is as it should be.

But we are throwing away a chance to build up the school systems in weak districts, and it seems to me that some constructive legislation is needed to secure the benefits of payments by results without its evils.

I am not competent, nor is this the place to enter into details, but as a basis of this system I think we should have, appointed and paid by the State, a number of officers whose business should be, each in a well-defined district, to report in a perfectly general way as to the efficiency of the schools and their fitness to receive aid. They should be paid by the State, so as to make them independent of local influence, and they should have power, not in the least to interfere with local effort, but solely to report on its success; not on each study, not on each school, but on the district. They should take into account possible and not ideal results. They should say to directors, you must make better schools, or you shall not have State money, or not as much State money. They would in time, if properly selected and disciplined, become influential in shaping policy and methods, but this would only be an indirect effect of their employment. Their main duty would be to secure the necessary guarantees that the large sum of \$5,000,000 annually given by the State is properly expended. By some such device as this you might secure all the advantages of English "payment by results," with no derogation to local enterprise and a continual uplift of the average standard of the schools.

Instead of saying, we will give you a quarter for every child taught geography, and then taking possession of the school to ascertain the facts and deducing the appropriation

by this arithmetical process, our inspector would report: "In such a district the school is not giving as good intellectual and moral results as one has a right to expect. I would recommend a reduction of its appropriation, until it shows itself competent to use it better." The district might find it actually cheaper to keep up a good school than a poor one. If a good teacher, costing a few dollars a month more, could receive from the State treble the increase of her salary, American shrewdness would dictate her employment, and after all the great secret of a good school is to place a good teacher in contact with children and fetter her by no restraints. The appropriation is now large enough to make its reception worth an effort.

2. Another point of contrast in the two countries is their attitude to secondary education. There are no State-aided secondary schools in England. A large number of schools, many of them since the reorganization of 1868 excellent schools, most of them dating their origin to the time of the Reformation, give the English boys of means a good education preparatory to business, technical schools or the universities. They have a noble history, excellent traditions, an efficient teaching staff, and are the most interesting features, because the most distinctively English, of the whole English set of educational institutions. But being old foundations, they are not distributed in accordance with the population. Many populous new towns have none, while in other quarters there is a redundancy. It was the noble dream of the reformers to place a grammar school for rich and poor in every parish, and have every one point to the universities, so that the poor boy, by scholarships in the universities which they often provided, should find his way clear to the Bachelor's Degree. Had their successors possessed their spirit the dream would have been a reality. But the rich have monopolized the schools, and even the university scholarships, and a poor boy, except in rare instances, cannot rise above the elementary schools. Even the middle classes,

which profit most by a secondary education, are excluded, except they happen to reside near one of these old endowed schools. For these schools the State does nothing. They do not wish anything from the State, and will not willingly accept any favors coupled with conditions. They have their endowments and their constituency. They do a good work in limited lines, and they are not anxious to give up their independence and become a part of any system involving government examiners, conscience clauses and certificated teachers. Hence they do nearly nothing, except in a few localities, to supply secondary education to the great middle classes of English boys. They are for the rich. But England is on the eve of a great reorganization of its secondary system. A recent private letter from a gentleman who will have a hand in shaping the movement says: "We are just starting on a very difficult voyage over here—the organization of secondary education, and there will be fierce fighting over it. I believe in the State supplying what has been left unsupplied, and requiring some very general conditions to be satisfied by what is in existence. Others would have everything under the direction of the State—they I shall fight to the death. The storm will break in about four months—a new government may delay it for a year—but storm there will be." And the Vice-President of the Council on Education, the practical head of the department, has said within a few weeks: "I find throughout the country a rising flood of public opinion in favor of some further development of secondary education, and a growing conviction of the need for lessening the chaos which lies between the now completely organized system of elementary education and the universities." The gaps of the system will be filled up by State-established schools. Those already existing will be co-ordinated without too much curtailment of their liberties, and we will see a system arise, wrought out in the, if tardy, yet thorough and effective, English manner. England is no longer ruled by the rich, and the sentiment that

they alone should be educated is passing away before the growth of a great Democratic wave, which, now represented in Parliament and Councils, is granting to all classes the chances to the best the country can afford.

There are but a score or two of men in both the historic universities who have ever been in a State-aided school. Ninety-nine per cent of all their students come from the fifteen per cent of the people who are called the upper classes. The prospects before an ambitious poor boy, except in rare instances, are cheerless in the extreme. The life of labor of the father is to be reproduced in the son, with only the advantage given by an improved elementary education of which the father probably has none at all.

America has been wiser or more fortunate. Our public school system has embraced the high school—an institution often with grave faults, but supplying a good opportunity, more often of the modern sort, to almost all boys and girls who ought to have it, and who will value it. It is the stepping stone between the elementary school and the University, in many States practically the only one which exists. Any one who can be supported to the age of seventeen or eighteen can go to college and any one can satisfy those aspirations which often are aroused later in life by a book, a lecture, a newspaper article, or a conversation. Every American college knows the young man of perhaps twenty-three or twenty-four, with a hiatus of years in his educational life, of a very slender patrimony, and shallow financial resources, but somehow suddenly aroused to a burning desire for a college degree and the learning which it implies. Such a late awakening would in England be absolutely futile. If it ever occurred it would be dismissed as an impossible dream. Such a person might almost as well aspire to be ruler of the United Kingdom. But here it is very possible of realization. He finds a free high school in the nearest town. From there he readily passes to a college or university, in many States, practically free

and supported by State funds ; in others, with a number of scholarships reserved for the poor and deserving, so arranged that they can be readily applied for without loss of independence, while the vacation affords the chances to replenish his resources for personal expenditure.

It is the free secondary school which makes this possible, which gives to every boy and girl a chance for the best in the way of education that the country can offer. How weak then is the cry of demagogues, and of some who are not demagogues, that the public purse should supply only the education of the masses, the three " R's," and that all beyond this savors of aristocracy. It would be unfortunate indeed, if, just as England is emerging from its blindness and traditional ideas into the light of which Matthew Arnold was the apostle, and though he knew it not, the prophet, we should allow any one to convince us that the people's money should go to elementary schools alone, thus hopelessly condemning to ignorance and inferiority many lives which were meant for something better.

Where a whole community patronizes the public school system and representatives from all sorts of people sit side by side in primary, grammar and high school, which is the case in New England and the Northwest, there is not much danger of any attack on State-aided public education in any of its parts being successful. It is to be hoped there is not anywhere, but the great strength of endowed, denominational and private schools in Philadelphia is creating a large class who have no direct interest in the free high school. Such schools in sufficient numbers are an excellent and useful stimulus to a public school system, competing with it for its brightest children, but if they become too popular they tend to make class distinctions and lessen that concern of all for the educational advancement of all which is the life of a democracy. An improvement and extension of our facilities for free secondary education in our large cities seem to me to be a great need. So far from this being open to the

charge of taking public money for the support of the few, it seems to be the very essence of the democratic idea. Every child does not need a secondary education, but every child needs to have the opportunity, if his intellectual and moral resources render it desirable for him.

3. Another point of contrast is in the matter of compulsory attendance. It was not till 1880 that this was made binding on all school boards of England. The requirements are now about as follows :

All English children are compelled to attend school after the age of five years, until they have passed the standard fixed by the local laws. This varies in different parts, but is usually the fifth or sixth standard ; when the child is on an average twelve or thirteen years old. If, however, the child is a bright one and can pass his standard at the age of eleven, he may be withdrawn from the school and placed at remunerative work on half time and at school the other half, for two years. At thirteen all compulsion ceases, unless by that time the child has not passed the standard for children of ten, in which case he must attend a year longer. This regulation is enforced with considerable strictness. A parent whose child does not attend regularly, and who has no good reason for absence, is liable to a fine not exceeding five shillings. If the parents are drunken and neglect their children habitually, or if the children have fallen into criminal habits, they may be committed to an industrial school, where they are kept for a greater or less time, educated, fed and in some cases housed at night. These schools are not popular. The parents are expected to pay two shillings a week, but this from such parents is very difficult to collect, and parent and child are often willing to promise regular attendance at an ordinary school as a condition of release. Often the poor look on industrial schools as prisons, which indeed they are.

It is pretty difficult to evade these laws. The first attempt is to keep the children off the school lists, and the nomadic character of the lower classes of London, renders this

sometimes difficult to detect. Children are hidden away upon the approach of officers and their existence resolutely denied. Once on the lists the only escape is feigned illness. Many and ingenious are the artifices employed. A child found wading in a pond gave bronchitis as a reason for non-attendance at school, while head and other aches, violent under observation, but suddenly disappearing, are not infrequent. The laws are said to be very unpopular with a limited class, who cannot understand why they should be forced to educate their children against their will, and in addition (until 1891), to pay the school pence. The existence of this class is the excuse for the compulsory law, which will probably, as has been the case in Prussia, in time extinguish it.

More respectable are the objections of those who, while admitting the necessity of compulsion, complain of the sweeping character of the laws, and the strictness of their enforcement in many places. From the age of five, every child must attend twice a day, five days in the week, for forty weeks in the year. Irregular attendance, as well as truancy, renders a parent liable to fine, and school boards are invested with great powers, which they must exercise, to detect evasions of the law on the part of children or parents or employers.

This is in strong contrast with the methods in the United States. Though all our schools are free, only part of the States have any compulsory laws, and of these only a very few rigorously enforce them.

They seem to be the only safeguards we have against falling to a secondary place in educational standing. Practically, all the European States, north of the Mediterranean peninsulas and west of Russia, are satisfied as to their efficacy; and we cannot depend any longer with safety on *drawing* to our schools, even though we make instruction, books and stationery free, the whole of the child population which ought to be at school. Without the immigration of the past twenty-five years we might have done this, but that has wholly changed the conditions.

Compulsory education usually makes itself unnecessary after a few decades. If a whole generation of men and women can be educated, they do not need much pressure to induce them to send their children to school. Ignorance tends to perpetuate itself, and so does education. In a permanent population the necessity for compulsory laws ought gradually to disappear. The first step is the difficult and important one. England has taken this step, and taken it with an emphasis which admits of no doubt that she means never to go back again. We have not. We have tried the other expedient of encouragement, but evidently this is not sufficient; and, before illiteracy further gains on us, we should seriously consider whether the welfare of the State does not demand that we should follow the course which France took so tardily, and England more tardily still, but which, once taken, no country has ever repented of. Notwithstanding various sources of weakness, the Royal Commission of 1886-88, which made an exhaustive inquiry into the subject, reported that compulsion had unquestionably increased the attendance in three ways: by its direct influence on parents; by the disgrace a parent feels at being brought before a magistrate; and by the fact that the completion of a certain standard would allow the child to be placed at remunerative work.

Taking England over, the average attendance is about seventy-eight per cent of the number on the school register; but as this number includes many children under five, to whom the compulsory laws do not apply, it is probable that eighty-two per cent would more correctly represent the average attendance of children above this age. In the United States the attendance is about sixty-seven per cent of the enrollment; in Pennsylvania, seventy-three per cent, and all are not enrolled.

In 1891 there were twenty-seven States and Territories which had enacted compulsory laws, sixteen of which had passed them in the preceding five years; but most of them

appear to be in favor of the law, but against its enforcement. Thus New York reports, "We have a compulsory law on our statute books, but it is a compulsory law which does not compel." Illinois says, "It is doubtful if this law has caused an increase in the attendance upon our schools of 100 pupils," and she has since repealed it. From Maine, "I am not aware that the provisions of the act were ever anywhere enforced;" and so on through the list. Indeed, except in two or three New England States, it is doubtful if compulsory laws have produced any serious effect in the United States. In some cases this is through defects in laws, more often as the result of a failure of public opinion to support the enforcement. There is no reason in the political history of Pennsylvania to show that the experiment would result more favorably here than elsewhere, and yet we are losing ground yearly for want of such a provision. While the population has increased twenty-two per cent in the past ten years, the school attendance has only increased one and one-half per cent. New York gives similar figures.

This is not reassuring. Europe has tried the experiment and it has succeeded, becoming each year more popular and easy of enforcement. We know the remedy, we can probably in time secure the law, but we care so little for laws which no one is personally interested in administering that whether passed or not we have no great hopes that it will cure the evil. That we need compulsory education is a matter about which there ought to be little doubt in the minds of those who have studied the history of the movement. Whether any law would give it to us and turn the tide of illiteracy is a doubtful question. It is a condition of affairs demanding the earnest thought of all citizens. It will hardly do to acknowledge ourselves beaten by the problem. There are facts enough attainable to show what is necessary in the way of a law, and we ought ultimately to make it efficient.

4. It is difficult to say anything new on the religious question. And yet one cannot well omit it, for on no point is the divergence of the two nations more apparent.

England approached the subject of popular education with societies representing religious bodies, or formed with reference to religious questions already partly in possession of the field. They could not be ignored, and the completed system had to be dove-tailed around their creations which occupied, but did not cover the ground. Hence, they were left in possession, taken into the system, received State grants and were allowed to propagate their religious views undisturbed. They were more than embraced, they were protected from competition whenever they offered sufficient educational privileges to equip a district. Otherwise they were supplemented. But in return for this financial aid and protection they were to arrange their time of religious instruction so as to place it at the beginning or end of the school day, and every dissenting parent was to be at liberty to remove his child without prejudice to his other work, during those minutes. Moreover, the State was not to examine or give any grant for the religious instruction. In this way Catholic schools, Methodist schools, Church of England schools, and schools managed by the British and Foreign School Society, whose motto was religious, but undenominational education, all came within the public school system, and all pursued unmolested their peculiar methods of religious instruction.

To fill up the gaps of the system a set of schools called Board Schools, managed by boards elected by the district and partially sustained by local taxes, was created. To one of these two classes of schools English boys or girls, between five and eleven (in some cases fourteen), are required to go.

Even in the Board Schools religious instruction may have a prominent place. It depends entirely on the locality. Of the 2255 school boards in England and Wales in 1886, about three-fourths had adopted more or less elaborate schemes of

what they called religious but undenominational instruction. In all cases the Bible was the basis of this work. Three hundred and ninety-four others read the Bible without comment, and only ninety-one omitted the subject altogether.

The scheme of the London Board is a seven years' course of Bible history and religious teaching, occupying a half hour per day. To illustrate this, one year's requirements taken at random will be given :

"Memory work : John xiv. 15-31 ; Ephesians vi. 1-18 ; lessons from Samuel and Kings, with special reference to the lives of Samuel, Saul, David and Solomon ; the life of Christ from third Passover to end of Gospels ; Acts of the Apostles, first two chapters."

Such a course as this continued all the years of a child's education will undoubtedly give a Christian bias to his mind. It is undenominational only in so far as it fails to draw any distinction between Christian sects, but it pays no regard to any unchristian beliefs. The holders of such are, however, protected by the liberty, a liberty in fact not frequently exercised, to withhold their children from this course while securing all the other benefits of the school.

England seems to be wedded to religious instruction, requires it in her public elementary schools by the wishes of the great majority of her people, and by perhaps an equal majority desires or is willing that this should be on a Christian basis.

In Pennsylvania, in seven-eighths of the public schools, the Bible is read by the teacher without comment, and this usually constitutes the sum of the religious instruction given. In many States this is omitted and the tendencies are more and more to bring our schools to the condition of the French, where every form of religious instruction is jealously excluded. The logic of our position, which implies the absolute separation of church and State, is rapidly driving us to this place. We must apply the same principles to Catholics, Jews, and unbelievers we do to Protestant sects, if in any locality they demand it. We cannot consistently

with our general theory, levy taxes to force teaching down children's throats against which their consciences protest, and while I believe it is a good thing to give even the weak ideas of religion usually gained by an unexplained reading of the New Testament and would hold on to it as long as I could, I should give it up in the face of any serious and respectable protest if we are to maintain our present theory of public schools.

And yet this is to my mind not a satisfactory result to come to. The American nation needs more rather than less religious instruction. The formal reading of the Bible is often a lifeless form. The children do not know the subject read about. One word of explanation is often worth the whole chapter read. The home, the church, and the Sunday School combined do not give nearly sufficient to many children, none at all to many others, and if we are to rule it out of the schools absolutely, we will also largely rule it out of the life of the nation. Also while natural ethics may be taught and be effective, it is not so pointedly taught as when reinforced by the religious sanction. Hence I do not believe that the absolute secularization of the schools can be permanently satisfactory except in so far as the nation lowers its standards, and I would be glad to find some compromise, if you will call it so, by which the great majority of the people, of any school district, could have a definite positive teaching of such a general sort as they might approve, not sectarian, with such an arrangement of hours as not to force the attendance of the minority of conscientious opposers. Even unbelievers are often glad or at least willing to have definite religious and moral ideas taught their children, and it hardly seems to me worth while for the great mass of the people, especially those of Anglo-Saxon descent inheriting the religious tendencies of the race, to witness their own growth in religious indifference, for the sake of a theory, if an equally satisfactory result for the rest of the nation can be secured by another arrangement.

If in a district of 100 families, ninety-five desire and would be greatly profited by the infusion of general religious truth, and cannot get it except through the schools, why not excuse the five from attendance and give it.

That the English educational system, in general, has certain advantages over ours, it would, it seems to me, be useless to deny, and we would not be true Americans if we did not recognize and copy good wherever we can find it, and yet, on the whole, we have a decided superiority, which the contrast we have been over, not at all complete, would not reveal.

Our system has a tremendous and overflowing vitality, which promises more for the future than the well-fitted machinery of England. Did you ever live in a country town during the week of a teachers' institute? It is a greater attraction than the new railroad or the circus. The air is saturated with educational questions. The teachers, often of the same social grade as the best of the residents, are received into the homes and made the central features of the excitement. The American free school is discussed, extravagantly, perhaps, in certain features, but on the whole, intelligently. Better still, have you ever been to a State or National Educational Convention? The discussions do not impress one as being in the least shallow or vaguely general. They seem to be the deliverances of men of thought and training and experience, who talk of questions of which they know, anxious for results, willing to face every problem as it arises, and absorbingly interested in the subject. They are stirred up themselves and they manage to communicate to others. They go to their localities, each one an enthusiastic agent of the cause of education.

Thus our country is permeated with educational life. England does not know so much of it. Her teachers do not read professional literature as ours do. They do not meet in conventions as ours do. They do not communicate popular enthusiasm for education as ours do. They are often more

highly trained, but frequently inferior in social grade and fineness of instincts. It is this pervasive and contagious individual ambition for education and intense belief in it among all classes of native Americans, inducing a jealous guard over the interests of our schools as fundamental to our whole national structure, which is to me the most striking contrast with the educational condition of our brethren across the Atlantic.

ISAAC SHARPLESS.

Haverford College.